

The “Impartiality” of Narcissus Luttrell’s Reading Practices and Historical Writing, 1679-1710

In the later Stuart period, the ‘implied reader’ invoked in prefaces and epistles was commonly an ‘impartial’ one. To read impartially was to behave like ‘an honest unbyas’d Jury-man’ who judged the public good ‘upon the bare hearing the Evidence on both sides’.¹ As a concept, impartiality became increasingly prevalent in a range of fields throughout the seventeenth century. It was common to the judicial ‘culture of fact’ described by Barbara Shapiro;² and it complemented the empirical investigation of the ‘New Science’, which led authors to ‘call for clear Proof, Fact, or ocular Demonstration’.³ Joad Raymond argues that a new emphasis on impartial reading and news publication emerged during the Civil Wars in reaction to an impersonal and partisan print culture. Impartial readers were expected to handle print sceptically, suspend their prejudice and judge a variety of partial sources in order to arrive at the truth. Preferably, intelligencers of news would also supply ‘matters of fact’ unaltered by partial editorial commentary.⁴ By the later seventeenth century, impartiality had become a rhetorical tool in religious and party polemic.⁵ Different sides (tory and whig or high and low church) enhanced the credibility of their arguments by portraying themselves as free from partiality and self-interest. At the same time, the increasing quantities and availability of ‘cheap print’ appealing to impartial readers – pamphlets, periodicals, dialogues and so on – spread this ideal to a wide audience. Yet while impartiality was invoked frequently, the act of reading, by its nature, leaves little in the way of material evidence. Histories of reading have difficulty connecting the implied with the actual

¹ James Tyrrell, *Bibliotheca Politica Or a Discourse By way of a Dialogue* (1692), Epistle.

² Barbara Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (London, 2003). See also Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger, ‘Instances of Impartiality’, in idem (eds.), *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden, 2013).

³ [John Toland?], *Two essays sent in a letter from Oxford* (1695), pp. 37-8.

⁴ Joad Raymond, ‘Exporting Impartiality’, in Kathryn Murphy and Traninger Anita (eds.), *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 141-67. Cf. C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 11-14.

⁵ Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 40; Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2006), p. 185.

reader.⁶ The same problem is faced by historians of political culture concerned with the ‘reception’ of cheap print. While we know much about cheap print’s ‘production’, finding its audience remains a constant problem. ‘It is difficult to assess exactly the impact print had on contemporary belief, and to what extent it shaped opinion’, goes a typical complaint.⁷

One way of finding this audience is to focus on the collecting practices of individuals who preserved, arranged and displayed cheap print for posterity. Narcissus Luttrell (1657-1732) was one such individual. He trained in law at Gray’s Inn and later served as MP in two parliaments (Oct. 1679-81 and 1691-95), as well as JP for Middlesex.⁸ Luttrell’s collecting began around the time of Titus Oates’s revelations of a Popish Plot to murder Charles II in late 1678. The habit stuck and, by Luttrell’s own estimation, within twenty-nine years he spent £1,500 on books alone as opposed to £200 ‘in repairing & fitting up’ his ‘house & goods’.⁹ While the collection has since been scattered by auction, Luttrell’s ownership of 3,405 publications are listed in *The Luttrell File* (1999), allowing historians to consult the prices, publication dates and comments he scrawled onto their title pages.¹⁰ Yet despite this rare evidence of cheap print’s reception, the collector himself, who wrote with ‘a marked air of detachment’, remains an elusive figure.¹¹

This article assesses the connection between Luttrell’s collecting and the concept of impartiality to understand why he consumed and preserved ephemera in such great quantities. To do so, it shifts attention away from his chronicling of contemporary events, which are well-

⁶ Kate Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his Books: Reading, Newsgathering, and Sociability, 1660-1703* (Oxford, 2015), p. 4; Stephen B. Dobranski, ‘Reading Strategies’, in Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 102-3, 106, 110; Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), p. 222.

⁷ Peter Hinds, *The Horrid Popish Plot: Roger L’Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 56, 108. See also Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (London, 2000), p. 300; Mark Goldie, ‘The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument: an Essay and an Annotated Bibliography of Pamphlets on the Allegiance Controversy’, *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 83 (1980), p. 479; Michael J. Braddick, ‘England and Wales’, in Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture* (2011), p. 23; Lois G. Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care, Restoration Publicist* (Baltimore, 2001), p. 134; Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-81* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 183.

⁸ Stuart Handley, ‘Luttrell, Narcissus’ [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/luttrell-narcissus-1657-1732>].

⁹ Estimate ‘since my father’s death [1677]’ in ‘an account of my estate [1706]’, Beinecke Library, Osborn c65.

¹⁰ S. Parks (ed.), *The Luttrell File* (New Haven, 1999) [hereafter *LF*]

¹¹ Henry Horwitz (ed.), *The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell, 1691-1693* (Oxford, 1972), p. x.

known to students of the era,¹² toward his less studied commonplace books and historical collections. Commonplacing was a humanist method of reading in which exemplary or useful maxims and aphorisms were ‘collected’ out of texts in a fragmented manner.¹³ Luttrell’s appreciation of judiciousness, moderation and impartiality can be established from the outset by turning to his most neatly presented folio commonplace book. It contains a number of entries cited ‘Ego’ (implying they were Luttrell’s personal maxims). Many encouraged conflict resolution, rather than partisanship: ‘It is the part of a wiseman to gett the mastery over his passions’; and ‘If thou art abuse[d] by a hasty passionate person with opprobrious language ... the best way is to take no notice thereof’.¹⁴ Likewise, Luttrell’s ‘Ego’ entries from sermons in his religious notebooks advised him to ‘engage in no parties or factions, but live peaceably wth all’.¹⁵ The use of ‘Ego’ throughout the folio commonplace book – which was not for rough note-taking, but compiled with care – suggests that the many similar maxims resembled Luttrell’s own opinion:

A wise man then is one that weights, compares & values things exactly; who governs his passions & keeps his mind entirely free, who judges impartially, chuses rac[t]ionally & pursues his ends wth diligence & proper application¹⁶

If Luttrell thought himself to be someone who kept ‘his mind entirely free’ to judge ‘impartially’, the reality was somewhat different. As Mark Knights notes, impartiality, moderation and dispassionate rationality were virtues paradoxically idealised by later Stuart partisans. This idealisation resulted from a sense that scandalous and irrational behaviour had contaminated public life.¹⁷ On the one hand, Luttrell noted that ‘Controversial books’ should ‘appeal to the

¹² Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714* (6 vols., Oxford, 1857).

¹³ Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 128.

¹⁴ Beinecke Library, Osborn b321, ff. 422, 502. A reproduction is available at British Library [BL], RP 3512. In all quotations, the abbreviation ‘y’ has been changed to ‘th’.

¹⁵ Osborn, b47 II, f. 41, John Sharp, ‘Ego this sermon on 28 June 1691’. See also Osborn b47/III, f. 56, William Hayley, ‘sermon at St Gyles 26 April 1696 / Ego’.

¹⁶ Osborn b321, f. 622 (‘Wisdom’), from John Lambe, *A sermon preach’d before the King at Kensington, January 13* (1695), p. 15. Similar maxims are made at Osborn b321, ff. 64, 212.

¹⁷ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, pp. 337–48. For the earlier rhetorical use of moderation in political and religious polemic see Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011); Peter Lake, ‘The Moderate and Irenic Case for Religious War: Joseph Hall’s *Via Media* in Context’, in Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (eds.), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 55–83.

world’ with ‘reason’ and avoid ‘railings & revilings & calling of names’.¹⁸ On the other, he consumed controversial books prolifically and annotated them with his own ‘reviling’ comments; terms such as ‘abusive’, ‘venomous’, ‘destructive’, ‘malitious’, ‘devilish’, ‘villainous’, ‘roguish’, ‘scurrilous’ and ‘scandalous’ abound.¹⁹ Indeed, Luttrell had a partisan perspective that influenced his reception of ephemera. He was hostile to the rise of popery and arbitrary government and, though a conforming Anglican, was sympathetic to moderate dissent.²⁰ This article analyses Luttrell’s support for the whig cause of excluding the Catholic, James, Duke of York, from the throne (1679-81) and his later support for James’s deposition by William and Mary in the Glorious Revolution (1688). Luttrell’s seemingly impartial reading practices, as we will see throughout, functioned as a form of political self-presentation that substantiated his whiggish interpretation of current events and history.

A case study of Luttrell’s “impartiality” can help to clarify key changes and continuities between the later and early Stuart reading publics. Luttrell’s collecting practices were part of a tradition of ephemera collection that stretched back to the beginning of the seventeenth century. As Noah Millstone and others have shown, a ‘significant minority’ of readers in this period acted within a ‘collecting culture’.²¹ This involved sharing and copying manuscript newsletters, speeches and pamphlets into notebooks, commonplace books and diaries; it also involved binding these publications into ‘miscellany’ volumes. Such collecting provided the raw materials for documentary history.²² Doing so helped readers to chronicle political tumults, create chronological narratives, find recurring ‘patterns’, draw ‘historical parallels’ and reveal the hidden intentions of political actors. By the late seventeenth century, a specialist market had developed

¹⁸ Osborn b321, f. 116 (‘Controversy’), from *A letter out of the countrey, to a friend in the city* (1695), p. 7.

¹⁹ LF, nos. 1966, 1339, 2375, 849, 782, 640, 402, 1421, 2786, 640, 3167, 1632, 2964.

²⁰ See, for example, his comment on Edmund Hicckeringill’s *The third part of Naked truth* (1681), LF, no. 1345: ‘Showing how unchristian it is for you to persecute your dissenting brethren.’

²¹ Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 2, 19; idem, ‘Designed for Collection: Early Modern News and the Production of History’, *Media History*, vol. 23, issue 2 (2017), p. 178. See also David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 196-238; Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publications in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 47, 79-80; James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 212-3.

²² Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 250-84.

within London’s book trade to cater for such collectors with auctions, catalogues and second-hand booksellers.²³ While Luttrell did not differ fundamentally from these earlier readers, he did adapt techniques learnt from humanist rhetoric and dialectics (to debate both sides of a question), as well as modern historical writing, to impose order onto an intensified print culture. The first part of this article will focus on Luttrell’s commonplace methodology in 1689 by looking at the kinds of publication he favoured and how they were arranged. It argues that his “impartial” reading practices thrived on a variety of short, cheap and digested publications rather than a small selection of authoritative sources. We must, of course, be wary of positing a simple shift from ‘intensive’ to ‘extensive’ modes of reading in the early modern period.²⁴ Still, there are significant differences worth teasing out between Luttrell and earlier individuals such as William Drake (1606-1669), who also read for public action but thought that ‘the multitude of books distracteth and distempereth the judgement’.²⁵ The article’s second part analyses the content and arrangement of Luttrell’s historical manuscript collection from 1679. Like earlier readers, Luttrell searched for ‘patterns’ and ‘historical parallels’ between the past and the present. His impartial methodology, however, was explicitly based on the documentary techniques of the historian, John Rushworth (1612-1690). Here Luttrell’s collecting had a partisan rhetorical effect that was more pronounced than earlier periods. The closing remarks will suggest why his reading practices fell out of favour during the eighteenth century, despite the continued value of impartiality up to this day.

²³ Michael Mendle, ‘Preserving the Ephemeral: Reading, Collecting, and the Pamphlet Culture of Seventeenth-Century England’, in Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, 2002). Both Luttrell and Anthony Wood annotated catalogues designed as being ‘Very useful for Gent[lemen]. that make collections’. See F.C. Francis (ed.), *Narcissus Luttrell’s Popish Plot Catalogues*; (New Haven, 1956) Nicholas K. Kiessling, *The Library of Anthony Wood* (Oxford, 2002), p. 151.

²⁴ Ann Blair, ‘Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2003), p. 13; Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 114-5; Ian Jackson, ‘Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, 47, 4 (2004), p. 1050; William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Pennsylvania, 2010), p. xvi.

²⁵ Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 181-2.

Figure 1 – Luttrell’s commonplace book from 1681, All Souls 135.

I

During the later Stuart period the public was asked in printed material to ‘judge’ upon matters of national importance on a scale not seen since the 1640s.²⁶ Often these appeals to the public’s judgement invoked impartiality. In 1681, for example, one publication set out questions and answers in ‘Pro and Con’ over the matter of exclusion, claiming to treat both sides of the debate with an ‘Evenness and Impartiality’ that allowed for ‘the weightiest Consideration and the clearest Eviction of Reason and Argument.’²⁷ In 1689 something similar was advocated by Gilbert Burnet, the chief propagandist for William of Orange.

I hope you will ... weigh the Reasons of both Sides, without partiality; ... and that you will hearken to all that can be said of both hands, being neither byassed to the *Affirmative* by your present Interests, nor inclined to the *Negative* as to the received Opinion[.]²⁸

Luttrell’s commonplace books from this decade suggest that he took a similar approach to structuring debate impartially. In 1681, he recorded into an octavo commonplace book his readings of publications debating whether there was a legal or historical precedent for parliament to exclude the Duke of York from the throne (All Souls 135). There are forty excerpts in the book and Luttrell used the same terminology as Burnet, heading each entry as ‘Affirm[ative]’ or ‘Neg[ative]’ depending on whether the arguments were exclusionist or loyalist respectively (Fig. 1). In late 1688, he began a more extensive octavo commonplace book containing 121 entries that also used the headings ‘Affirm[ative]’ or ‘Neg[ative]’ (All Souls 134). This time the entries followed a topical question that set the Church of England’s principle of unconditionally obeying the monarch (‘passive obedience’) against the right to depose a tyrant (‘contractual resistance’):

²⁶ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 235; Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago, 1998), p. 357. For the earlier period see Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 58, with references to impartiality at pp. 204, 395.

²⁷ *The great case put home in some modest queries humbly proposed* (1681). This publication was commonplaced into Codrington Library, All Souls College MS 135 (18) [hereafter All Souls]. These commonplace books are unpaginated, so I have numbered entries in order of appearance.

²⁸ Gilbert Burnet, *A pastoral letter* (1689), pp. 28-29; emphasis added, All Souls 134 (7, 92)

whether a nation having an established religion, laws and privileges, which are subverted by the prince and another religion endeavoured to be introduced, whether the people of that nation can stand up in the defence thereof, and oppose their prince in such illegal attempts and depose him:

Luttrell asked two further questions, one focusing on the outcome of James’s ‘desertion’ to France in December, 1688:

Whither a King by leaveing his people, & going into a foreign kingdom, & carrying wth him all the Ensigns of Governmt, does thereby forfeit his right? or w[ha]t becomes of the Governmts whither Interrupted for the present, forfeited or dissolved? as in the case of King James. 2d. of England.

Luttrell’s final question was made after William and Mary were offered the vacant throne on 13 February 1689 and a new Oath of Allegiance was required of all MPs, officeholders and clergy: ‘Whither a people whose King abdicates the Governm[en]t, being deposed by the states of the kingdom, & they sett up a new one, if Allegiance is due to the old or new one?’ Entries under these questions were organised with the same principle of weighing ‘the Reasons of both Sides’; they were headed ‘Pro’ and ‘Versus Regnum’ and ‘old’ and ‘new’ respectively. As an officeholder, Luttrell was one among an estimated 40,000-100,000 readers who were required to ‘judge’ the lawfulness of supporting and then swearing allegiance to the new regime.²⁹ In so doing, the collector appears to have impartially considered a diverse selection of opinion ‘without partiality’ to arrive at his judgement.

However, Luttrell’s consideration of both sides of these questions was not an intrinsically impartial exercise. To debate pro and con (*in utramque partem*) was central to humanist rhetoric and dialectics. Luttrell would have learnt this technique from his schooling and honed it during his judicial and political career. It was taught in humanist educational manuals, grammar schools and the Inns of Court; and it was practiced in humanist dialogues, Protestant casuistry, university disputations and parliamentary debates.³⁰ The memoranda of Elizabeth I’s chief minister, William Cecil, provides an early example of someone who deliberated upon state affairs by

²⁹ Goldie, ‘The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument’. p. 483.

³⁰ Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (2002), pp. 28, 50; Markku Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics and Popularity in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 68-69, 134 and for commonplacing contrary ideas see pp. 81-2; Anita Traninger, ‘Taking Sides and the Prehistory of Impartiality’, in Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger (eds.), *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 33-64; Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, p. 226.

arranging notes into pro and con.³¹ Such note-taking was not intended to facilitate impartial judgement of diverse opinion. Rather, as Markku Peltonen observes, it furnished ‘adversarial’ humanist rhetoric. The rhetorician aimed ‘to move the audience to their own side and to destroy and demolish the opponent.’³² Luttrell had a similar goal in mind, as another entry in the ‘Ego’ commonplace book suggests:

we must therefore endeavour to enter into our adversaries mind, & suppose ourselves to be in the same circumstances, to have the same thoughts & affections ab[ou]t us, that he had when he writ; thus by following his errors to their beginning, we may find a way to unravel them or show him how he came to be misled³³

This combative approach to reading is especially evident in Luttrell’s other commonplace books grappling with Catholic doctrine. One of these, ‘[A] Confutation of Popish errors collected out of various authors’, was started in 1675 and primarily filled in 1686 at the time of James’s catholicising policies.³⁴ Luttrell structured the notes like the ‘question and answer’ format of anti-Catholic catechisms.³⁵ He placed excerpts under topical headings (‘on idolatry’), and beside each Catholic doctrine (‘the papists say’) he added a Protestant answer. In another commonplace book (c. 1687-96) Luttrell divided similar notes into columns headed ‘Pap[ist]’ and ‘Protest[ant]’,³⁶ a division resembling an ‘impartial’ anti-Catholic publication that he frequently cited. ‘I might rightly understand [and] truly represent the Doctrine which I profess to censure’, explained the publication, ‘for without a faithful and *impartial examination* of error, there can be no solid or true confutation of it.’³⁷ The same rationale can be applied to Luttrell’s commonplace books from 1681 and 1689, which he collected in order enhance his rhetoric and better ‘confute’ his enemies. In this respect, the collector presents a continuity with earlier readers who shared

³¹ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 17-18; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 191. Another earlier example of note-taking in pro and con is in the manuscript miscellany of the godly minister Robert Horn (1596-1640). See Colclough, *Freedom of Speech*, p. 224.

³² Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics and Popularity*, p. 7.

³³ Osborn b321, f. 106, ‘Confuting or Answering another’, from *Impartial thoughts upon the nature of humane soul, and some passages Concerning it in the writings of Mr. Hobs and Mr. Collier ...* (1704).

³⁴ Osborn b269.

³⁵ Luttrell’s commonplace book was composed using such publications, including: a ‘short catechism in questions & answers. tract in 24. 1686’, Osborn b269. f. 12; *A papist misrepresented, and represented* (1686); its response, *The papist represented and not misrepresented* (1686), f. 26; and a ‘popish tract’ titled *A search into the grounds of religion* (1686), f. 13.

³⁶ Folger Shakespeare Library, MS K.b.2. 74.

³⁷ *A catechism truly representing the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome, with an answer thereunto* (1686), preface; emphasis added. Osborn b269, ff. 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17-21.

his humanist ‘communicative expectations’, and thus jars with the ideal of rational and convivial discussion that constituted the Habermasian ‘public sphere’ emerging in this period.³⁸

Notwithstanding this continuity, Luttrell’s “impartial” collection of contrary opinion was still novel in combining humanist argumentation with an ‘extensive’ form of reading based on short and cheap publications. The ‘Best way of answering [books]’, he thought, was ‘to pick out what is most materiall, wch may be done in a little compasse’. This was a method that did ‘not require much time in the writing ... [and] so may be done by those who are in buisy stations’. And if these answers were printed they ‘would not take up much time in the reading of it; [and] the price of it would be small so that any one might purchase it.’³⁹ This approach to reading and writing was reflected in the types of publications recorded in the commonplace books, which contrast with the bibliography of pamphlets from the Allegiance Controversy compiled by Mark Goldie. In 121 entries, Luttrell used just thirty-four publications out of a possible 192 from the bibliography.⁴⁰ Whereas Goldie’s pamphlets generally cost six-pence, were thirty pages or over, and contained ‘sophisticated’ theoretical debate, Luttrell preferred less substantial material. Out of 115 excerpts with identifiable bibliographical information, only 18% are pamphlets of 30 pages or more. The majority of these larger titles are sermons, a common genre at sixteen entries.⁴¹ Periodicals offering digests of new books were another favourite (twelve entries). These included De Lacroze’s *The Works of the Learned, or An Historical Account and Impartial Judgment of Books Newly Printed* (1692), which helped readers to ‘maintain Conversation with the Learned upon any subject’ at ‘a small Expence of Money and Time’.⁴² Nine of the publications were half-

³⁸ Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 3; Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics and Popularity*, p. 8. Luttrell’s use of rhetoric is perhaps better suited to an earlier ‘post-Reformation public sphere’. See Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2 (2006), pp 273-279, esp. p. 275.

³⁹ Osborn b321, f. 68 (‘Books’), from *The Occasional Paper*, no. 1 (1696), p. 5.

⁴⁰ Goldie, ‘The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument’, pp. 473-564. The bibliography excludes material often used by Luttrell: periodicals, reprints and all but three sermons.

⁴¹ Printed sermons performed similar functions to cheap print in disseminating political debate. In 1681, sermons were said to be ‘as commonly cryed about the Streets’ as ballads. Edmund Hickerlingill, *The horrid sin of man-catching* (1681). On Williamite sermon culture see Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 87.

⁴² All Souls 134 (54). Other titles include: *Miscellaneous letters, giving an account of the works of the learned, both at home and abroad* (1694-6), All Souls 134 (55); *Weekly memorials: or, An Account of books lately set forth*, no. 2 (1689), All Souls 134

sheets (half of a folio sheet); and twelve were half-sheets folded into four page quartos. Half-sheets were sold for either a penny, a halfpenny or given away in the street *gratis*.⁴³ Only six publications were of a larger folio format, though short in length at around the four-page mark. The rest were quartos that rarely went above sixteen pages. They therefore used no more than two folded sheets of paper and, given that paper was the printer’s main expense, were probably cheaper than six-pence.⁴⁴ Overall, then, Luttrell’s extensive collection of arguments in pro and con drew upon a diverse range of cheap material not traditionally studied by historians of political thought. The first entry referring to Lockean contractual theory based on natural law, for example, was taken from the preface to Thomas Shadwell’s political comedy, *Bury-Fair* (1689).

Luttrell’s reading practices also warrant our attention because they did not replicate humanist rhetoric straightforwardly. Instead, the collector’s partisan motivations, combined with his contradictory idealisation of impartiality, distorted the purpose of debating *in utramque partem*. In a university setting this practice did not require a speaker to personally support the position they defended. It rather required a ‘disinterested partiality’, whereby speakers put forward the best case regardless of their opinion to ensure a question was thoroughly answered.⁴⁵ Initially, Luttrell’s commonplacing in 1681 does demonstrate a disinterested attempt to enter his ‘adversaries mind’. Out of forty-one excerpts in pro and con, twenty-one were loyalist; and the most cited source was Roger L’Estrange, a tory polemicist whom Luttrell detested.⁴⁶ By 1689, however, Luttrell’s engagement with contrary opinion became less intensive. Out of the 121

(14). De Lacroze’s journal was also used in Osborn b321, ff. 68, 370. Another learned journal he often used was *Memoirs for the Ingenious, or, The universal mercury*, Osborn b321, ff. 34, 158, 468.

⁴³ Luttrell’s collection of forty-five half-sheets from 1688-9 are annotated with these prices. British Library, c.122.i.5. [hereafter BL]

⁴⁴ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 262.

⁴⁵ Traninger, ‘Taking Sides and the Prehistory of Impartiality’, p. 44.

⁴⁶ In 1680 Luttrell described L’Estrange as one who had ‘writt many things (as he pretends) for his majesties service, but they have caused most violent animosities amongst his majesties subjects and will prove very destructive to the protestant interest’. *A Brief Historical Relation*, i, p. 39, quoted from Mark Knights, ‘Judging Partisan News and the Language of Interest’, in Jason McElligott (ed.) *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 211. See also *A Brief Historical Relation*, i, pp. 120, 198.

entries in pro and con, 82% supported the Revolution.⁴⁷ And when he did excerpt contrary opinion, it was usually skin-deep at best. The book opens with lengthy transcriptions from Burnet’s pamphlets and its most frequent source was James Welwood’s Williamite periodical, *Mercurius reformatus: or the new observatory* (1689-91).⁴⁸ By contrast, Luttrell’s contrary opinion is short, digested and taken from especially insubstantial sources, such as a half-sheet of Jacobite ‘queries’.⁴⁹ Another disparity of effort between the pro and con selections is evident from Luttrell’s decision to commonplace a burlesque satirical letter by Louis XIV as a defence of James’s divine right.⁵⁰ The publication from which his entry derived was hardly the most persuasive, given that it depicted James as an accomplice to the threatening spectre of French universal monarchy.⁵¹ Another example occurred at the time of the Oath of Association (1696), which required MPs to swear loyalty to William as the ‘rightful and lawful king’ (not just as *de facto*). Again, Luttrell used a disreputable source to provide contrary opinion. This was partly due to the muted printed reaction to the event. While twenty percent of the House of Commons refused to sign the oath, only a dozen publications were printed to debate the matter.⁵² But rather than draw upon these, Luttrell found an old Jacobite pamphlet, *Elementa politica*, to provide a single ‘Negative’ entry. In 1689 the tract’s ‘Papist’ author was charged with seditious libel for denying the validity of the Magna Carta. We can presume its claim that the king had ‘a supream

⁴⁷ By comparison 72% of the 192 pamphlets in Goldie’s bibliography were pro-Revolution. See ‘The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument’. p. 484.

⁴⁸ All Souls 134 (9, 48, 49, 97, 98, 110).

⁴⁹ The first entry in All Souls 134, covering nearly nine pages, is from Burnet’s *An enquiry into the measures of submission to supream authority* (1688). The Jacobite extracts barely fill a page. See *Queries relating to the present state of England* (1689), All Souls 134 (18, 79). The ‘query’ as a print genre has not been studied thoroughly, but see Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care*, p. 141; Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, pp. 167-8.

⁵⁰ *The French King’s answer to Mons, Tyrconnel’s letter* (1690), All Souls 134 (99).

⁵¹ For the fear of French universal monarchy in Williamite propaganda see Tony Claydon, ‘Protestantism, Universal Monarchy and Christendom in William’s War Propaganda, 1689–1697’, in Mijers, et al. (eds.), *Redefining William III* (Aldershot, 2007); Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009), p. 313.

⁵² Edward Vallance, ‘The Decline of Conscience as a Political Guide: William Higden’s View of the English Constitution (1709)’, in Harald Braun and Edward Vallance (eds.), *Contexts of Conscience in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 78; Pincus, *1688*, p. 463.

authority’ over parliament was, like other contrary opinions, not judged with complete diligence by the collector.⁵³

If after 1689 Luttrell’s contrarian argumentation fell short of rigorous ‘disinterested partiality’, why copy out these excerpts at all? The extracts may still have helped him to confute his opponents, though perhaps this function was less urgently required in 1689. Whereas public opinion in 1681 was swinging toward the tories, debate during the Revolution was saturated in Williamite propaganda. ‘There has scarce appeared one Piece that was written’ in defence of the passive obedience, complained a tory publication, without it being met with ‘a swarm of virulent and malicious Pamphlets against it, written no doubt by Their Majesties special Friends’.⁵⁴ Rather than rebalance the questions under debate, though, Luttrell appears to have merged his humanist methodology with the impartial rhetoric common to the partisan cheap print he read.⁵⁵ By setting one side ‘over-against the Other, and ... comparing them together’, to use the terminology of a published whig ‘Collection’, Luttrell was ‘better able to determine Himself, and to satisfy Others’ of his position.⁵⁶ Without scandalous reflection, his commonplacing supported the Williamite position and, arguably, reaffirmed the collector’s support for the Revolution. So, while Luttrell’s reading practices unsettle the assumption that partisans ‘read only the publications that presented their own side of the controversy’,⁵⁷ they also highlight how illusory the ideal of impartial reading was in this period. The next section explores Luttrell’s history writing to show further how impartiality shaped his collecting and reading practices and, in turn, expressed his political identity.

II

⁵³ The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, Ref. No. t16891009-44 [www.oldbaileyonline.org]. Luttrell’s commonplacing is the only known (partial) copy of this publication’s text, which is no longer extant. All Souls 134 (57).

⁵⁴ *A letter to the authors of the answers to The case of allegiance due to sovereign princes* (1691), p. 2.

⁵⁵ For example, *A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory* (1693), cited at Osborn b321, f. 100, claimed to have ‘impartially made a Collection’ of arguments made by both sides (p. iii), although its motives were obviously partisan.

⁵⁶ White Kennett, *The Wisdom of Looking Backward* (1715), p. iii.

⁵⁷ Harold Love, ‘How Music Created a Public’, *Criticism*, vol. 46, issue 2 (2004), p. 259; James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge 1986), p. 146. For contrary arguments see Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, p. 246; Jason McElligott, ‘1641’ in Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Vol. I: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford, 2011), p. 602.

Impartiality was a key concept in later Stuart history writing. Its central figure was John Rushworth, who pioneered the use of unbiased documentary histories with minimal editorial intervention. The first volume of Rushworth’s *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State* (1659) documented the causes of the Civil Wars from 1618-29, reproducing parliamentary speeches, letters, trials and petitions. Rushworth called himself ‘a Collector of Matters of Fact’ who allowed readers to ‘compare Transactions past, with such as now occur’.⁵⁸ He was read widely, not least by students of law such as Luttrell.⁵⁹ Indeed, though Luttrell is primarily viewed as a consumer of cheap print, he too compiled a manuscript collection of documents. He titled it: ‘A collection of severall affairs of state both publick & private in the time of King James, King Charles 1st, & his present Matie. [Charles II]’.⁶⁰ The collection begins with copies of documents from James I’s reign, progresses chronologically, and culminates with copies of Popish Plot ephemera. Rushworth’s *Historical Collections* were specifically cited by Luttrell and used more than any other source to document the parliamentary petitions and speeches of the 1620s.⁶¹ A similar impartial documentary collection, Thomas Fuller’s *Ephemeris Parliamentaria* (1654), was probably another source of parliamentary speeches.⁶² However, such impartial documentary history was more controversial than its proponents let on. Rushworth’s collections vindicated the actions of the Long Parliament and the first edition was dedicated to Richard Cromwell, then Lord Protector. The tory historian, John Nalson, in his own self-consciously titled *Impartial Collection* (1682), exposed Rushworth’s moderation. Rather than providing unbiased documents, Luttrell’s

⁵⁸ John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (8 vols., London 1659-1701), i, preface. See also Raymond, ‘Exporting Impartiality’, p. 143.

⁵⁹ Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his Books*, p. 117. Rushworth influential reputation helps to explain why the Scottish book runner, James Fraser (1645-1731), preserved an unedited draft of the *Historical Collections* for January 1642 in a collection of manuscript ephemera relating to later Stuart history. University of Aberdeen Special Collections, MS 3952/7.

⁶⁰ All Souls 169, dated by Luttrell ‘1679/80’.

⁶¹ Cited at All Souls 169, p. 45. The proceeding petitions and answers between the Commons and James I from 1621 onward (pp. 45-112) match those reproduced in Rushworth’s first vol. of *Historical Collections*.

⁶² Speeches at pp. 168-80 match those reproduced in *Ephemeris Parliamentaria*, though Luttrell does not cite his sources here.

main historical influence was said to ‘charge the King in Epitome, with the Guilt of all the Calamities and Miseries of the Late Rebellion’.⁶³

By creating a documentary collection that charted the growth of popery and arbitrary government, Luttrell produced a similar impartial justification for his support of the whig cause of exclusion. A description of the collection helps to clarify that Luttrell’s collection was almost certainly compiled by its owner. ‘There were thirty-four items comprising speeches, letters, petitions, trials and prophecies. Sixteen items show the fraught relationship between the Stuart monarchs and parliament in the 1620s; thirteen are from 1676-79 and relate to cases of Court corruption, French absolutism and Jesuit plotting. Most of the text is written by Luttrell’s amanuensis, though several entries are in his own hand.’⁶⁴ The collector also added corrections, pagination and an index to the volume. At least one entry can be cross-referenced with another volume in Luttrell’s library: the ‘Papists letter to the King 1610’, part of a Jacobean manuscript miscellany acquired in 1679.⁶⁵ Given Luttrell’s connections to the Inns of Court, the collection also places an emphasis on legal affairs. It contains, for example, the orders made to the Inns of Court and Chancery in 1664 (pp. 275-286).

The collection remained in manuscript and its circulation would therefore have been confined to a trusted circle of like-minded readers.⁶⁶ Luttrell never resorted to printed publication. This may be due to his social status, given that an entry in the ‘Ego’ commonplace book suggested that print authorship was an ungentlemanly activity.⁶⁷ Pragmatism came into it too, given the use of controversial texts that necessitated caution. Another personal maxim of Luttrell’s was that ‘the best rule that any Historian can follow is to write truly but cautiously’.⁶⁸

Thus in the collection Luttrell amended, at a later date, a scandalous letter from 1678 implicating

⁶³ John Nalson, *Impartial Collections* (2 vols., 1682). On Rushworth’s and Nalson’s political motivations see Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars After 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (2013), pp. 97-101; Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, p. 272; R.C. Richardson, ‘Re-fighting the English Revolution’, in *Social History, Local History, and Historiography: Collected Essays* (Newcastle, 2011), ch. 5.

⁶⁴ The same amanuensis hand used in Osborn b46: ‘The Character of a Trimmer’.

⁶⁵ All Souls 155, ff. 54v-56v.

⁶⁶ Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, p. 81.

⁶⁷ Osborn b321, f. 60 (‘Authors’; ‘how yey pay yeur debts’). On this prejudice see Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, p. 176.

⁶⁸ Osborn b321, f. 250 (‘History’).

the entire court party in a French-backed conspiracy to dissolve parliament. In different ink Luttrell crossed out references to the King and Queen and *most* references to the Duke (though none to the Duchess of Portsmouth).⁶⁹ He deemed the piece ‘A most malicious treasonable letter, to asperse his Maj[es]tie & raise jealousies of him to his people, & traducing severall of his good Subjects’ (p. 315).⁷⁰ A potential audience for the historical collection while such scandal was credible is suggested by Luttrell’s correspondence with the whig bookseller, Jacob Tonson. At this time, Tonson was preparing manuscript newsletters for Luttrell to keep him abreast of developments while he was on his ‘travels’.⁷¹ Tonson referred to having ‘cald at Mr Starkys’ for ‘business to send to him’. This was probably John Starkey, bookseller to the radical whig society, the Green Ribbon Club.⁷² In 1675 Starkey was running a scriptorium near Temple Bar where domestic news, parliamentary votes, speeches and addresses were transcribed into manuscript copies.⁷³ Starkey was said to be frequented by both the ‘disaffected’ and the ‘Young lawyers of both the Temples and the other Inns of Court’ at the very time Luttrell was receiving his legal training at Gray’s Inn.⁷⁴

Luttrell’s collection would have appealed to such ‘disaffected’ readers during the Exclusion Crisis because his arrangement of documents was designed to spark historical parallels between earlier periods and the present troubles. ‘Foretelling Future things’, he wrote in the ‘Ego’ commonplace book, could be achieved ‘[b]y observation of circumstances in times past’. His conventional thinking was that an observer could tell from experience that when ‘such & such things have happn’ed upon such & such conjunctures’ then from a similar situation the

⁶⁹ Portsmouth continued to be vilified by whig publications showing the rise of popery at court. See esp. *The Secret History of the Dutchesse of Portsmouth* (1690).

⁷⁰ All Souls 169, f. 315. Similar self-censorship occurred in Luttrell’s collection of manuscript newsletters compiled from 1678-81, All Souls 171, discussed in Knights, ‘Judging Partisan News’, p. 211.

⁷¹ For Luttrell’s travel diary see: ‘Travells, 1677-1680’, Osborn b314.

⁷² The letters are in All Souls 171 and reproduced by Stephen Bernard, “‘Tonson’s Remains’: The Earliest Letters of Jacob Tonson the Elder”, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2011), pp. 188-207, esp. p. 194. Tonson and Luttrell’s relationship is also evidenced by the bookseller’s gift of John Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*, LF, no. 821: ‘Ex dono Amici Jacobi Tonson.’

⁷³ These items touching on domestic affairs competed with government-sanctioned newsletters and the *London Gazette*, a newspaper confined to reporting on foreign affairs.

⁷⁴ BL MS Egerton 3329, f. 57, quoted from Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, pp. 20-21.

‘same effects will follow.’⁷⁵ While early Stuart manuscript compilers also contextualised their ephemera within the recent past, Luttrell’s collection resulted from trends in the history market after the 1640s. This involved a move from classical to modern histories such as Rushworth’s *Historical Collections*. According to Paulina Kewes, this trend instigated a ‘rage of historical parallels’ and led to a shift from ‘broad analogy’ to ‘exaggerated’ correspondences in historical thinking.⁷⁶ Such thinking habits were inflamed by the events of 1681 and 1689. Exclusionists were, for example, accused of trying to ‘rake in the kennels of histories, & pick up all the black & unjustifiable actions of severall ages to make good their own seditious principles, & think themselves good men, if they can find any upon record as bad as themselves.’⁷⁷

Luttrell’s use of historical parallels can be demonstrated by looking at the texts he selected to build-up chronologically toward the Popish Plot. The first item is especially telling. It was a speech made by the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Egerton (1540-1617), given at a meeting of the assize judges in the Star Chamber on 13 February 1605. The speech concerned the threat of irreligion to national security (papists, puritans and atheists). His comments on popery would have appeared all too prescient to exclusionists in early 1679. Egerton condemned ‘those who give out scandalous speeches that his Ma[jes]tie. doth intend a tolleracon of popery’ and promised his audience that ‘if he [James I] did think that the prince his sonn after him would admitt of a tolleration of popery, that he would rather disinheritt him’ (p. 15). Fears over the rise of popery repeat cyclically (as per humanist concepts of history) throughout the compilation. Many of the documents expressed identical concerns, such as parliament’s petition to James in 1621 and the 1678 parliamentary commission into the ‘Causes Of Popery. & remedies for the preventing the same’. Both suggested that ‘Licentious printing and dispersing of Popish and

⁷⁵ Osborn b321, f. 214 (‘Foretelling Future things’), from William Talbot, *A sermon preach’d before the right honourable the Lord Mayor* (1700).

⁷⁶ Paulina Kewes, ‘History and Its Uses’, in idem (ed.), *The Uses of History in Early Modern England* (San Marino, 2006), pp. 25, 14; Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his Books*, pp. 111-2.

⁷⁷ *Observations upon the tickling querie* (1681), p. 1, All Souls 135 (17). This was evidently a charge that Luttrell felt compelled to defend himself against, for questions over the use of historical parallels and precedents appear frequently in contrary arguments noted within All Souls 135. See, for example, *A just and modest vindication of His Royal Highness the Duke of York*, p. 7 (1680) (30); *The great case put home in some modest queries* (1681), p. 13 (18); *Of a Coffee house Dialogue or a discourse between Capt. Y & a barrister of ye Temple* (1681), p. 3 (24).

sedition books’ should be controlled; and both suggested that education of children in Catholic seminaries (abroad and at home) should be suppressed (p. 49 & pp. 319-320). Such concerns were repeated in a 1678 letter, which claimed that Jesuits had ‘printed in the English tongue 200000 Catechisms and Rosaries for young children’ (p. 313).

Luttrell’s collection also encouraged a ‘whig’ interpretation of the Civil Wars and the renewed clashes between the monarchy and parliament. The influence of ‘evil councilors’ was represented by documents related to the Duke of Buckingham’s unpopular involvement in the Spanish Match. It was also shown by the Earl of Danby’s letters exposing his backhand dealings with the French ambassador to prorogue parliament. Other whiggish documents included speeches made in parliament and counsels given to Charles I defending Habeas Corpus, Magna Carta and the need for kings ‘to yeild unto the Subjects demands’ to avoid bloodshed (p. 219). Finally, the prophecies of Anne Wentworth and Archbishop Usher were placed just before the ephemera relating to the Popish Plot. Protestants would soon ‘fall under a sharper persecution, then ever yet they have had upon them’, according to Usher (p. 269). This gave the collection a puritanical touch,⁷⁸ but also suggested that these future events had been foretold. Appropriately enough, the final document was a copy of the first Exclusion Bill read to parliament in May 1679. Based on this collection, Luttrell’s obituarist seems correct in describing him as ‘one of the warm promoters of the Exclusion bill’.⁷⁹ Even in May 1682, after the defeat of the exclusionist cause, we find Luttrell purchasing hundreds of pamphlets at auction on the ‘Priviledges of the House of Commons in Parliament’, ‘the necessity of the late Rebellion’ and ‘Tyrants set forth in their Colours’.⁸⁰

Luttrell almost certainly began compiling the historical collection in early 1679, showing how easily history writing merged with the consumption and collection of contemporary ephemera (manuscript and print). His documents relating to the Popish Plot circulated in the

⁷⁸ Prophecy had been condemned as early as *The Canons* of 1604. See Tim Harris, *Rebellion* (London, 2013), p. 81.

⁷⁹ Horwitz, *The Parliamentary Diary*, p. xi.

⁸⁰ *Bibliotheca Smithiana, Maii die 15*, (1682), pp. 385-6, BL, c.120.c.2 (Mic.619/547). He bought seven lots in total, only one of which was royalist themed.

winter of 1678 before the expiry of press licensing in May 1679. Luttrell probably included them because they agreed with the official line taken after Oates and Israel Tongue testified before parliament in October 1678. One of Tongue’s allegations was that the Jesuits planned to set London on fire, as they had supposedly done in 1666. In November parliament ordered the investigation of a French fireworks maker with stocks of gunpowder. Luttrell subsequently included in his historical narrative ‘A Copy of a Letter Found, 23rd November, 1678, by a Bookseller on his stall at the green Dragon in Pauls Church yard, & taken up by him in the evening [when] he shutt up Shop’ (p. 306). The letter was ‘directed on the outside to the Protestants of London’ and, with cartoonish villainy, it read in full:

You pitifull silly Protestants, you that have no more witt then a goose, (we Roman Catholicks) will make you know, that before Christmas day we will make your blood lye thick on the ground, & make you show obedience to our Holy Father the Pope, & root out all heresie & schism, and perhaps you may have a hott day before Christmas in London, that shall be as hott as the third of September 1666, was[.]

By placing such ephemera into a longer historical narrative, Luttrell added credibility to this fugitive letter as well as Oates and Tongue’s allegations. The importance of historical parallels thus helps us to rationalise what is traditionally considered a ‘mass hysteria’.⁸¹ Luttrell pinpointed the same ‘conjunctures’ (popery and arbitrary government) and, logically, the ‘same effects’ that would follow. Collecting even the most dubious ephemera through the conventions of documentary history writing facilitated impartial judgement.

Luttrell was not the only collector to understand the 1680s through the prism of ‘impartial’ modern history. A useful point of comparison is the cheap print collection of the high church tory and Buckinghamshire gentleman, John Verney (1640-1717).⁸² Initially Verney’s collecting went hand-in-hand with his role as a news agent in London for his family at Claydon House, Buckinghamshire.⁸³ Most of the publications in the collection are from 1679-81, though

⁸¹ J.P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, 1972). A view qualified in Hinds, ‘The Horrid Popish Plot’.

⁸² Cambridge University Library, Sel.2.114-126. [hereafter CUL] See Paul Hopkins, ‘The Verney Collection of Popish Plot Pamphlets’, *Bulletin of the Friends of Cambridge University Library*, ix, (1988).

⁸³ BL, Mic. M636/1-60. For letters beginning Jan. 1679/80 see M636/32.

the latest was published in 1695. The collection was bound after the crisis and Verney returned to annotate it at various stages (as late as Queen Anne’s reign). Verney added dates, prices, deciphered references and sometimes provided biographies or biographical details (title, occupation and social rank) to the persons mentioned in the texts.⁸⁴ He also updated a list of JPs by drawing macabre skulls next to the names of those who died, ensuring the collection remained an accurate historical resource.⁸⁵ In his youth Verney showed signs of sympathy with latitudinarian pleas for Protestant unity.⁸⁶ But like many others, he began to doubt the truthfulness of the Popish Plot and instead believed that dissenting republicans were the biggest threat to the nation. As one tory dialogue put it: ‘all the Popish Plotters are vanish’d, or Metamorphos’d into Phanatical Presbyterian Conspirators.’⁸⁷ Most of Verney’s annotations appear factual (or impartial) rather than polemical, though some express hostility toward the Informers as they fell from grace. ‘Dr. Titus Oates his father was an annabaptist weaver’, went one; another called Tongue a ‘restless freakish man’.⁸⁸ Verney also annotated a ‘moderate’ loyalist pamphlet accusing dissenters of trying to ‘defame the Government, and debauch the People from their Loyalty’ as being ‘A smart piece’.⁸⁹

Verney’s collections reflect the tory preoccupation with drawing historical parallels between the Civil Wars and the Exclusion Crisis. Historians generally agree that the tories won the battle for opinion because they convinced the public that republicans were playing ‘the Old Game again’ and renewed Civil War was imminent.⁹⁰ Charles II supposedly made the connection when, after being presented with the county of Essex’s petition for the sitting of parliament, he

⁸⁴ This is especially prevalent on the elegies collected into CUL, Sel.2.126.

⁸⁵ *A Catalogue of the Names Of all His Majesties Justices of the Peace in Commission* (1680), CUL, Sel.2.119 (101).

⁸⁶ Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: the Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), p. 66.

⁸⁷ *A vindication of the Lord Russell’s speech and innocence, in a dialogue betwixt Whig & Tory* (1683), p. 9, CUL, Sel.2.120 (81).

⁸⁸ *Oates’s manifesto* (1683), p. 22, CUL, Sel.2.120 (46); *The Last Will and Testament of Anthony King of Poland* (1682), CUL, Sel.2.126 (86):

⁸⁹ [John Nalson], *The True Protestants Appeal to the City and Countrey* (1681), CUL, Sel.2.118 (51).

⁹⁰ Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms, 1660-1685* (London, 2006), ch. 4; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 184-192.

said ‘it look’t much like 41’.⁹¹ Often Verney’s annotations enhanced the textual parallels made between the Civil Wars and the Exclusion Crisis. For example, beside references to the radical whig, Slingsby Bethel, Verney added on two occasions Bethel’s rumoured connection to the regicide (‘whom some thinke was the Person in masque that beheaded King Charles the First’).⁹² Other marginal comments alluded to scatological royalist ballads and stereotypically ‘hypocritical puritans’ from the Commonwealth period.⁹³ Particularly evocative of the ‘late troubles’ were the annotations made onto cheap print publicising the Earl of Shaftsbury’s plans for a controversial new Association in defence of the ‘Protestant Religion’. These plans were found on a document in Shaftsbury’s closet and brought as evidence to his treason trial in November 1681.⁹⁴ Tory publications drew parallels between Shaftsbury’s Association and parliament’s Vow and Covenant made on June 6, 1643.⁹⁵ On these publications Verney scrawled ‘traytours’ twice beside a list of parliamentarians. Likewise, on list of subscribers to the Covenant of 1643 he annotated which were regicides and which were beheaded after the Restoration, thus associating the Long Parliament with the more widely condemned actions of the Rump after 1648.⁹⁶ Unsurprisingly, Verney was also moved to correct the inclusion of his royalist father, Ralph Verney, on the list of subscribers, noting that ‘[he] did not take this Oath but went into france’.⁹⁷

Verney’s collection therefore substantiated a tory interpretation of history. To achieve this, and contrary to Luttrell’s methodology, he sometimes used colourful editorial intervention

⁹¹ All Souls 171, 23 Jan [1680], f. 112v.

⁹² *The Last Will and Testament of Anthony King of Poland* (1682), p. 4, CUL, Sel.2.118 (203); *Iter Boreale* (1682), CUL, Sel.2.126 (46).

⁹³ Beside a reference to Thomas Atkins, a member of the Rump Parliament who was lampooned by ‘Rump’ ballads in 1659/60, Verney added: ‘aldn: Atkins who did beshit himself’. CUL, Sel.2.123 (153): *The Boys Whipt home: Or, a Rhyme upon the Apprentices Poem, &c.* (1681). On these satires see Mark Jenner, ‘The Roasting of the Rump: Scatology and the Body Politic in Restoration England’, *Past & Present* (2002), no. 177, pp. 84-120. Beside Zachary Crofton’s name, a Presbyterian preacher who was accused of taking sexual pleasure from whipping his maid, Verney added ‘[he] that whips his maids’. CUL, Sel.2.121 (33): *A proposall humbly offered, for the farming of liberty of conscience* (1662). The case is described in Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 173-4.

⁹⁴ Newton Key, “‘High Feeding and Smart Drinking’: Associating Hedge-Lane Lords in Exclusion Crisis London”, in McElligott (ed.) *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution* (2006), p. 157.

⁹⁵ *The two associations: one subscribed by CLVI members of the House of Commons in ... 1643. The other seized in the closet of the Earl of Shaftsbury* (1681); *The parallel: or, The new specious association an old rebellious covenant* (1682).

⁹⁶ *Shaftsbury’s Farewel: Or, The New Association* (1683), p. 2, CUL, Sel.2.118 (204); *The two associations ...* (1681), pp. 5-6, CUL, Sel.2.118 (197).

⁹⁷ *The two associations ...* (1681), p. 5, CUL, Sel.2.124 (8).

in the margins to heighten historical parallels. Verney’s collecting is therefore comparable to Nalson’s documentary history, *Impartial Collections*, which also included partial editorial intervention. Raymond suggests that Nalson’s partiality, seemingly in contradiction to his choice of title, was justifiable because he was revealing an underlying ‘pattern’ driven by God’s providence: from the world turned upside down by sectaries and republicans to the restoration of episcopacy and monarchy.⁹⁸ In this case, pointing out parallels between past and present with editorial invention was permissible. All the same, both Verney and Luttrell were partisan collectors, even if the latter avoided opinionated interjections; both types of collecting plainly documented and communicated topically relevant historical parallels that supported their compilers’ political views.

III

This article has used Luttrell’s commonplace books and historical collections to both recover the intentions of this elusive collector and to shed light on the paradox of ‘impartial reading’. Luttrell was a partisan consumer of polemical prints who, at the same time, idealised impartiality as a way of moderating debate and judging matters of national importance. Impartiality evidently factored into his collection of cheap print and manuscript ephemera by encouraging him to judge diverse opinions, build a narrative of contemporary events, and highlight ‘exaggerated’ historical parallels without a partial editorial voice. Yet such “impartial” reading practices had older roots in argumentative humanist rhetoric and, arguably, functioned as an allusive form of political expression that substantiated a whiggish opposition to popery and Jacobitism. In this respect, by 1689 Luttrell was replicating the rhetorical impartiality used by partisan authors and publishers in the later Stuart period. When James Tyrrell wanted to instill whig political philosophy amongst the young gentry, for example, he published ‘impartial Collections’ of arguments for and against the Revolution in a dialogue, claiming not to impose ‘Judgement, but to leave it to the intelligent,

⁹⁸ Raymond, ‘Exporting Impartiality’, p. 145.

and impartial Reader to embrace that side on which he found the most rational & convincing Arguments’.⁹⁹ And when publishers in the 1690s and 1700s wanted to present a whig vision of modern history, they ‘carefully and judiciously put together’ collections of pamphlets without partial commentary.¹⁰⁰ It may be the case that Luttrell was, as Adam Fox puts it, ‘no more than another gentlemanly book-lover whose relationship to the readers and hearers on the London streets was at best tangential’.¹⁰¹ But it is also the case that Luttrell’s impartiality reflects a key feature of later Stuart print culture.¹⁰²

While impartiality continued to be valued during the eighteenth century, Luttrell’s reading practices would nevertheless lose their relevancy. In John Locke’s ‘New Method’ of commonplacing the humanist technique of debating in pro and con was discouraged. Locke thought that ‘the multiplying variety of arguments’ gathered from ‘other men’s thoughts’ discouraged readers from being ‘steady and settled in their own judgments’. In the Enlightenment, greater emphasis was placed on self-knowledge over an intellect furnished from other people’s words.¹⁰³ We might also consider Luttrell’s reading practices as a transitional example of the shift in reading detected by Steven Zwicker: from ‘intensive’ and ‘combative’ humanists, to ‘mechanized’ and ‘pacified’ readers who accepted differences of opinion. This shift was caused by the rise of abridgements, digests and other aids that lessened the labour of

⁹⁹ Tyrrell, *Bibliotheca Politica*, Epistle.

¹⁰⁰ *State Tracts: Being a Collection of Several Treatises Relating to the Government* (1689; 1692-3); *A Choice Collection of Papers Relating to State Affairs; during the late revolution* (1703); *A Collection of State Tracts* (1705-7); *A Compleat Collection of Papers* (1689), All Souls 134 (93).

¹⁰¹ Adam Fox, ‘Cheap Political Print and its Audience in Later Seventeenth-Century London: The Case of Narcissus Luttrell’s ‘Popish Plot’ Collections’, in Roger Chartier (ed.) *Scripta volant, Verba Manent. Schriftkulturen in Europa Zwischen 1500 und 1900*. (Basel, 2007), p. 230.

¹⁰² Luttrell’s impartiality was, of course, not the only factor driving the collection of cheap print. Collectors from the Civil War period such as George Thomason (d. 1666), and later seventeenth-century collectors such as Anthony Wood and Thomas Hearne, considered their collections to be valuable historical and antiquarian resources without explicitly referring to impartiality. The concept should instead be viewed as complementary to collecting. The Williamite pamphleteer, Edmund Bohun, for example, reflected impartial rhetoric when using the printed papers he ‘collected’ to display ‘the matter of Fact’ in a Williamite history of the Glorious Revolution, adding that ‘without which it is impossible to pass any judgment upon the merits of the case’. Edmund Bohun, *The history of the desertion* (1689) quoted from Knights, ‘Judging Partisan News’, p. 214. Bohun’s collections are at CUL, Sel.3.232; CUL, Sel.3.235-8.

¹⁰³ Lucia Dacome, ‘Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 65, no. 4. (2004), pp. 611-2.

reading.¹⁰⁴ On the one hand, Luttrell made extensive use of these aids and thus differed from earlier readers who shared a pool of ‘common wisdom’ taken from substantial classical and biblical texts.¹⁰⁵ On the other, he maintained a ‘combative’ (or ‘adversarial’) approach to reading. For much of his life Luttrell consumed cheap print to engage with his opponents. ‘It is not any real dishonor, but a manly generosity & a Christian vertue’, he noted, ‘to change a man’s opinion upon the evidence of better reason’.¹⁰⁶ Still, we can question how ‘intensive’ Luttrell’s contrarian argumentation really was after 1689, given that his selections became skewed in favour of his personal position.¹⁰⁷ In any case the collector’s combative reading would become increasingly unfashionable in eighteenth-century ‘polite’ society, where diverse opinion could be better accommodated.¹⁰⁸ Even impartial rhetoric became such an inadequate fig leaf for partisanship that, by the 1740s, poets began exploring the idea of *withdrawing* from the public sphere altogether to achieve a truly impartial state.¹⁰⁹

Accordingly, Luttrell’s documentary practices changed later in life. After 1710 he stopped using cheap print to record arguments in pro and con. Instead from 1722-25 he kept a daily summary of his activities in a private journal.¹¹⁰ This activity resembled Joseph Addison’s advice to his polite readers that they should ‘keep a Journal of their Lives for one Week, ... setting down punctually their whole Series of Employments during that Space of Time’. Addison claimed that this ‘kind of Self-examination would give them a true State of themselves, and incline them to

¹⁰⁴ Steven M. Zwicker, ‘The Constitution of Opinion and the Pacification of Reading’, in Kevin Sharpe and Steven M. Zwicker (eds.), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 295-316.

¹⁰⁵ Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 72, 182, 190; Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*, pp. 182-2; Anna Battigelli, ‘To Conclude Aright Within Ourselves’: Narcissus Luttrell and the Burden of the Protestant Reader, 1678-88,’ in Sabrina A. Baron (ed.), *The Reader Revealed* (Washington, D.C., 2001), pp. 78-79.

¹⁰⁶ Osborn b321, f. 80 (‘Changing a man’s opinion’), from Martin Strong, *Indecency and Unlawfulness of Baptizing Children in Private* (1692).

¹⁰⁷ Luttrell’s commonplace books exemplify how ‘the ousting of *in utramque partem* discourse was not a straightforward process’, but one involving the introduction of a concept (impartiality) into the ‘old habit’ that was both ‘alien’ and appeared ‘to fit perfectly’. See Traninger, ‘Taking Sides and the Prehistory of Impartiality’, pp. 55, 58.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftsbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Christine Gerrard, ‘The Language of Impartiality and Party-Political Discourse in England, 1680-1745’, in Murphy, et al. (eds.), *The Emergence of Impartiality* (2013), pp. 211-22.

¹¹⁰ BL, Add. MS 10447 (written in Greek letters), partially reproduced in P. Dixon, ‘Narcissus Luttrell’s Private Diary’, *Notes & Queries*; vol. 9 issue 10 (1962), pp. 88-392; & *Notes & Queries* (1962) 9 (12), pp. 452-454.

consider seriously what they are about.’¹¹¹ In 1710 Luttrell also moved into Chelsea House, the former residence of the philosopher of politeness, the 3rd Earl of Shaftsbury. He made sure to procure the same breed of dog as the Earl.¹¹² Along the way he seems to have picked up the Earl’s polite doctrine of self-examination, focusing on his own behaviour rather than amassing large quantities of differing viewpoints.

¹¹¹ *The Spectator*, no. 317 (March 4, 1712) quoted from David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 55.

¹¹² ‘Mr Wheelock for a puppy of his Ld Ships breed.’ Osborn c65.